

Name: _____

ENG4U

Literary Elements and Devices-A Guide

Literary devices are a collection of universal, artistic structures that are typical of all works of literature. They are frequently employed by writers to give meaning and a logical framework to their works through the use of inventive language and structure. When such works are read by readers, they ultimately recognize and appreciate them.

Literary elements are what comprise a story: plot, dialogue, point of view, moral and theme.

Here are some examples of literary devices:

1. Imagery: It is the use of figurative language to create visual representations of actions, objects and ideas in our mind in such a way that they appeal to our physical senses. For example:

The room was dark and gloomy. -The words “dark” and “gloomy” are visual images.
The river was roaring in the mountains. – The word “roaring” appeals to our sense of hearing.

2. Simile and Metaphor: Both compare two distinct objects and draws similarity between them. The difference is that Simile uses “like” or “as” and Metaphor does not. For example:

“My love is like a red red rose” (Simile)
He is an old fox, very cunning. (Metaphor)

3. Hyperbole: It is deliberate exaggeration of actions and ideas for the sake of emphasis. For example:

Your bag weighs a ton!
I have got a million issues to look after!

4. Personification: It gives a thing, an idea or an animal human qualities. For example:

The flowers are dancing beside the lake.
Have you see my new car? She is a real beauty!

5. Alliteration: It refers to the same consonant sounds in words coming together. For example:

Better butter always makes the batter better.
She sells seashells at seashore.

6. Allegory: It is a literary technique in which an abstract idea is given a form of characters, actions or events. For example:

“Animal Farm”, written by George Orwell, is an example allegory using the actions of animals on a farm to represent the overthrow of the last of the Russian Tsar Nicholas II and the Communist

Revolution of Russia before WW II. In addition, the actions of the animals on the farm are used to expose the greed and corruption of the Revolution.

7. Irony: It is use of the words in such a way in which the intended meaning is completely opposite to their literal meaning. For example:

The bread is soft as a stone.
So nice of you to break my new PS4!

Common Literary Elements

- 1. Plot:** It is the logical sequence of events that develops a story.
- 2. Setting:** It refers to the time and place in which a story takes place.
- 3. Protagonist:** It is the main character of story, novel or a play e.g. Hamlet in the play Hamlet
- 4. Antagonist:** It is the character in conflict with the Protagonist e.g. Claudius in the play Hamlet
- 5. Narrator:** A person who tells the story.
- 6. Narrative method:** The manner in which a narrative is presented comprising plot and setting.
- 7. Dialogue:** Where characters of a narrative speak to one another.
- 8. Conflict:** It is an issue in a narrative around which the whole story revolves.
- 9. Mood:** A general atmosphere of a narrative.
- 10. Theme:** It is central idea or concept of a story.